

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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### ***The Network for a Healthy California—Desert Sierra Region Latino Campaign Celebrates Latino Health Awareness Month to Empower Families to Make Health a Priority*** Latino Moms Learn Ways to Sustain Health for Our Generation During Tough Economic Times

**Apple Valley, California, September 12, 2009** - *The Network for a Healthy California—Desert Sierra Region Latino Campaign*, Paul Swick Family Center, San Bernardino County University of California Cooperative Extension, American Cancer Society and other health organizations will host the Harvest to Home Community Garden Grand Opening at Yucca Loma Elementary School in Apple Valley, California. The event is part of this year's Latino Health Awareness Month, a statewide effort to empower Latinos to make health a priority for themselves and their families – a change that will sustain health for future generations. The festive event will offer educational resources, including ideas on how to eat right when money's tight, healthy budget-friendly cooking demonstrations and fun ways to get active to adopt lifelong healthy changes.

Many Latino moms are facing challenges during these tough economic times. Latino Health Awareness Month is one of the many ways the *Latino Campaign* is helping families in Apple Valley be Champions for Change who take small steps – like buying fruits and vegetables in season and going for walks together – to sustain health for themselves and their families, even on a tight budget,” said Leticia Salazar Allen, coordinator, *Network for a Healthy California—Desert Sierra Region Latino Campaign*.

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In Inyo, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties nearly 70 percent of Latinos ages 18 and above were overweight or obese in 2007<sup>1</sup>. Through Latino Health Awareness Month events, the *Latino Campaign* provides tips and tools to help low-income Latino families across California take charge of their families' health to help reduce their risk of serious health problems like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer.

The event will feature fun filled activities, such as Hula Hoop and Zumba Fitness, and basic health screenings and healthy food demonstrations. Special guests, such as Valerie Smith, Director, Paul Swick Family Center at Yucca Loma Elementary, and representatives from partner organizations, will speak about the new community garden and their organization's role in supporting the Yucca Loma Elementary Community Garden as well as other community gardens in the region.

As part of the event, the *Network* will showcase some of its new Spanish-language radio ads featuring a female Mariachi band. The cheerful spots give a new spin to traditional "corridos" – a regional music style popular in Mexico – transforming the lyrics into catchy messages that empower the Latino community to make health a priority for themselves and their families. The ads began airing in June and will continue to play through October.

The Harvest to Home Community Garden Grand Opening in Apple Valley is an example of how the *Network for a Healthy California—Desert Sierra Region Latino Campaign* works to eliminate the disparities that place low-income Latino families at greater risk of obesity and other serious health problems by empowering them to make healthy choices for themselves, their families and communities.

"It's time for low-income Latinos to stand up for healthy change so we can turn the tide on obesity and the health problems that follow," said Allen. "Today's event is a powerful example of how the *Network* encourages more and more families from throughout the *Desert Sierra Region* to join our movement and make healthy living a priority in the Latino community."

This event is one of several statewide Latino Health Awareness Month events to be held throughout California during September. To find an event near you or for more information about the *Network for a Healthy California*, how to become a Champion for Change and how food stamps can increase low-income California Latinos' food budget, visit [www.cachampionsforchange.net](http://www.cachampionsforchange.net).

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<sup>1</sup> University of California Los Angeles Center for Health Policy Research. California Health Interview Survey 2007 , Adult AskCHIS internet data system, BMI using Race-UCLA-CHPR, <200%FPL; 2007.

About the *Network for a Healthy California*

The *Network for a Healthy California* (*Network*) is a public health effort working with hundreds of partners and organizations to empower low-income Californians to live healthier lives through good nutrition and physical activity. Funding is from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). For food stamp information, call 877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit [www.cachampionsforchange.net](http://www.cachampionsforchange.net).

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